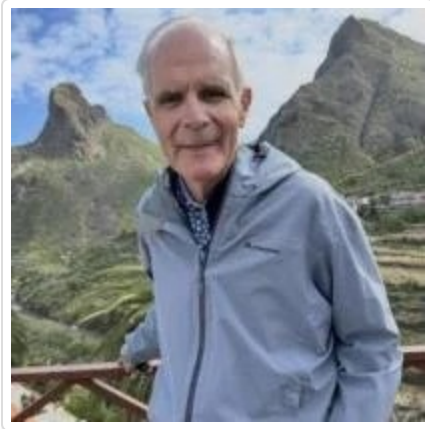




Thomas Austin Collier III

September 4, 1945 - August 21, 2026

Thomas Austin Collier III was born in Trenton, New Jersey, two days after the official end of World War II. His father, crossing the Atlantic on an aircraft carrier heading home, learned by telegram that his son had been born on his own birthday.

As a boy in Millersville, Pennsylvania, Tom studied his father's roadside atlas, tracing with his finger imaginary trips he would someday take around the country and the world. He eventually took them—and carried that same curiosity into medicine, business and investment management, baseball, painting, and his greatest intellectual passion, American history. After graduation from The Hill School, Yale University, and Officer Candidate School, Tom rose to Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War, first serving aboard the USS Cogswell (DD651) and later on a joint forces assignment in Saigon. His unerring punctuality led to a chance one-on-one, early-morning encounter with baseball legend Joe DiMaggio, who was eating breakfast in the chow hall during a visit to the troops—a story Tom delighted in telling for the rest of his life. Another chance meeting in Vietnam with Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, one of the most consequential U.S. Naval leaders of the 20th century, instilled lasting respect and later inspired his annual visits to lay flowers on his grave at the U.S. Naval Academy cemetery. An opportunity to observe a physician providing medical care to war victims at a Saigon clinic sparked his interest in pursuing medicine.

Tom graduated from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and remained there

for his residency in orthopedic surgery. At Hopkins he met Ginger Upchurch, a fellow medical student from Alabama who would become his wife. Before opening his practice, Tom planned a four month around-the-world adventure with Ginger and her identical twin sister Kathy; they travelled to places then rarely visited by Americans, including war-torn Kashmir and China in the post-Mao transition period.

Tom and Ginger made their home in rural Kent County, Maryland at Comegys Bight in a pre-Revolutionary War house on the Chester River that remains in the family 45 years later. He served on the vestry of Emmanuel Episcopal Church and on the boards of the United Way of Kent County and Kent School in Chestertown.

After a decade practicing medicine, Tom's curiosity pulled him in a different direction. He earned an MBA from Wharton and became a national consultant to HCA Healthcare, working on improving operating room and hospital efficiency. His work took him across the country, and Tom made a point along the way of visiting all 50 states.

Tom's love of American history—and Maryland history in particular—eventually led him to chair the board of the Maryland Historical Society during the bicentennial of Francis Scott Key's writing of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” During their years together in Maryland, he and Ginger sailed the Chesapeake Bay from top to bottom on their sloop, the *Trois Jeunes Filles*. Tom was a master at getting the boat unstuck when it ran into shoals and navigating by the stars at night when the engine broke down.

He was a devoted father to his three daughters, taking great interest in their education and the lives they were building. During two memorable summers Tom took his young daughters on father-daughter trips by Amtrak train—one across the United States and later another across Canada. He was the family bard who wrote poems to celebrate family weddings and to memorialize annual vacations. He loved to sing Broadway songs with his grandchildren and play with all of their family dogs.

Even as Alzheimer's disease narrowed Tom's world, he and Ginger did not

stop exploring it, taking a second around-the-world journey together by ship. He traveled the country to see his daughters and ten adoring grandchildren, who called him “Tom A.”

In the last year of his life, Tom spent hundreds of hours rooting for the Baltimore Orioles. He attended all nine innings of an O’s-Phillies game in person just three weeks before his death, singing “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” enthusiastically.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Ginger, who resides in Wickenburg, Arizona; his sister Ruth Manning; his daughters, Ann Collier (Tyler Ray), Katherine Spencer (Jacob), and Louisa Gehring (Greg); and his ten grandchildren—Caroline, Marianna, and Sam Gehring; Elizabeth and Thomas Spencer; and Hattie, Austin, Tyler, Margaret, and Louis Ray. His family is grateful for the Hopkins family and Katie Martinez, and for Suncrest Hospice who provided support during his illness.

A memorial service will be held at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Chestertown, Maryland on Sunday, May 30, 2027. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that contributions be made to Because Baseball (becausebaseball.org) or the United Way of Kent County (<https://www.unitedwayofkentcounty.org/donate>).

Upcoming Events

Memorial Service

MAY **30**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Emmanuel Episcopal Church
101 N Cross St
Chestertown, MD 21620-1527
(410) 778-3477